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PROPOSALS

FOR PUBLISHING BY SUBSCRIPTION,

THE FIRST PART OF THE

SYNOPSIS

OF THE

UNIVERSAL PRACTICE

OF

MEDICINE,

EXHIBITING A CONCISE VIEW OF ALL DISEASES, BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL: ILLUSTRATED WITH COMPLETE COMMENTARIES.

By JOSEPH LIEUTAUD,

FIRST PHYSICIAN TO LEWIS XV.

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Now first translated from the Latin,

By EDWIN A. ATLEE, M. D.

FELLOW OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, PHILADELPHIA.

EXTRACT

FROM THE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE mind is astonished when viewing the miserable condition of mankind, ignorant of their future destiny, catching with cries, the first breath of life, and yielding it in a short time to inevitable Fate. Nor do the poor sufferers spend even this short span of existence in peace, but are wearied with numberless afflictions, among which the formidable Phalanx of Diseases lifts its dire head. Some through stress of gloomy care, and influenced as it were, by an unlucky planet, have laid guilty hands upon themselves. Hence it is little to be wondered at that some licentious ones, tainted with an impertinent Itch for Scribbling, should through impatience and fickleness of mind rashly bring upon themselves the misfortunes with which they are borne down, and which they impiously charge upon the SUPREME AUTHOR OF GOOD. Those, however, who excel in virtue, and are better acquainted with Nature, have on all hands refuted these cavillers, and more rationally concluded that adversities are owing to the wickedness of mankind, who would never have suffered them, had they not deviated from the simple manner of life of their progenitors.

When man was yet rude and uncultured, in the new Earth and under the recently formed Heaven, and the uncorrupted fruits of the Ground were his food: when lowly Tents were the habitations of Flocks and their Lords in common; when the chaste wife not more polished than her husband feasting on nuts, made up her ill-contrived covering of skins, and strewed her rustic couch with leaves; when as cultivators of paternal Fields and keepers of Flocks, they indulged in moderate labour and grew old in unimpaired vigor: Then were they governed by the Law of Nature, and were not anxious, so long as *Truth* flourished, to solve the perplexities of human Laws. Little solicitous about the *origin* and *causes* of things, so sedulously traced by their descendants, they followed the Philosophy of Nature, by which they discovered *Effects*, and used to discern *Right*

from *Wrong*, and *salutary* from *noxious* things. It was not necessary that men who kept off disease by this simple mode of living, should unravel the Problems of Medicine; for although ignorant of this science, they enjoyed a life untainted and uncontracted by Maladies. And when grey hairs approached, they despised not an old age so conspicuous for Virtue; but welcomed it with the highest honours and religious veneration until having filled up the measure of their lives in placid industry, they, without fear departed to their Heavenly Rest.

But when the world became foolish and degenerate, Idleness crept in, and the accursed love of Gold led mankind captive. All morals were perverted, Sons refused to follow the footsteps of their Fathers, they vied one with another in splendour, wealth and family distinction, and began to devise base things, not blushing to change black into white. Ever panting after happiness, they betook themselves to sumptuous Edifices, decorated their bodies with softest raiment, Gold and Purple, exhibited to the wondering crowd, Feasts of exquisite dainties, tortured with every variety of cookery; in short, exhausted by every species of luxury and gluttony, every vice followed close at their heels, the practice of which in a short time obliterated shame, and all things gradually went to decay and ruin.

It is no marvel, if as this destruction advanced, all the laws of the Animal Æconomy should have been perverted, and a grievous host of diseases should afflict these madmen, who notwithstanding yielded very reluctant submission to these calamities. Even then however they might have provided for their restoration, had they profited by this chastisement, and settled their fluctuating minds by the *precepts of wisdom:* but, borne away by their own lusts, they thought little about investigating the cause of their misery, although conscious of their licentious manner of life, and made no exertion to avert these fell distempers, but only to mollify or remove them by chance remedies, or such as were at hand, the good or bad effects of which they noted. So that from their observations, collected and arranged, might have sprung that primitive and rude art of healing, which in its infancy dwelt in Egypt, from whence it migrated into Greece, and of which no learned man is ignorant.

Among the Greeks, the first who collected the scattered Theories of Diseases (assisted perhaps by the writings of Asclepiades) and reduced them into a System when culled from the Votive Tables in the Temple of Æsculapius, was **HIPPOCRATES**, whose writings are truly precious, although they have much dross and impurity mixed with them, unless as some conjecture, his legitimate works have been contaminated by spuri-

ous additions. Even the Hippocratic Art might have been lost by the injuries of time and rudeness of the age, if GALEN had not undertaken, with his great abilities, to restore it, torn as it was by innumerable sects, after the lapse of six hundred years. This GALEN was a Physician, second to none, but he has befouled his writings with vanity and verbosity enough to sicken one.

The Medical Art advanced but little afterwards, nor did the other sciences experience a better fate until the 7th century, when the *Arabs* and *Saracens* laid waste almost all the world, and even Athens and Rome. Yet there were not wanting, among these barbarians, some who cultivated the Greek Language and gave earnest attention to promote the study of Medicine; and through the care of these the art was revived, and slowly advanced, until a century had nearly elapsed: since which time innumerable medical writings have appeared, many of which are condemned to oblivion, and given to the moths and worms, while others contain many things which are tolerable, but are chiefly made up of mere hypotheses, rendered prolix by a great round of words that weary the reader. There are notwithstanding a few more durable than brass, and fraught with exquisite observations. But various domestic concerns forbid me comparing this mass of all kinds of books, nor is it in the power of men, incumbered as I am with practice and frequent watching of the sick, to look them over.

Hence many, of no mean rank, urged by these difficulties, have bestowed great labour to encounter this almost insuperable disadvantage, or by some means to sooth the rugged path of Medical Science. These, by comprising in few words what were here and there written in more diffuse style, endeavoured to limit this exceedingly ample science.

Various Compendia have appeared: exhibiting rather a specimen of learning than a just rule of practice, which therefore, with leave of the illustrious authors, afford little satisfaction to a mind desirous of knowing what is true and expedient. And although nothing would be more out of date than for me to *cultivate this Broom*, yet the unfortunate event of the above-mentioned works, has in no wise withheld me from my undertaking. Whether I shall be more successful, let those determine, who have traced the recesses of Clinical Medicine. Yet far be it from me, after a view of so many publications of the same nature, *to write an Iliad after Homer, or serve up Colewort twice boiled.* My design is vastly distant from these Compendia, and the principal part of this work is drawn from my own store-house, I mean from my clinical and anatomical notes, some of which

are already superannuated, and contending with mouldiness, I have thus saved them from destruction, but do not publish them entire, (as I had hastily thrown them together in sheets) rather as abridgments or deductions that I might spare the labour of my readers. This Epitome is not only contained herein, but also that of the copious works of the most fabulous writers, which I have searched with unwearied labour, not without repentance for the undertaking, that I might pick out from the immense confusion of Books, such only as were of use in practice, and reduce them to my plan. Wherefore, from all these, accurately digested, and disposed in clearer order according to their importance, leaving out the learned and curious comments with which others abound, and lopping off every thing foreign from my purpose, this Synopsis has been produced, not an elementary or didactic work, but made up of mere observations, while engaged among the sick and the dead.

I have enumerated under distinct heads, all Affections of what kind soever, among which some have occurred hitherto unheard of. The signs by which they are known, and the symptoms whereby they are attended, are carefully noticed. An accurate history of Diseases does not always require to relate separately, whatsoever Authors have advanced on any subject, for their works more often savour of subtilty of genius, than careful observations in practice. Moreover, every one knows, that to consider these morbid appearances of nature, sometimes as *signs*, sometimes as *symptoms*, according to the whim or pleasure of Physicians, renders it difficult to distinguish them one from the other. It may be well also to remark that all that are reckoned under the title of any disease, in no wise manifest themselves in every subject, but some or other of them, are sooner or later, to be discovered, so that we only cite those which are general and uncertain. By this we may understand why an accurate delineation of each morbid affection would be arduous and difficult, since there is none which, on account of the inexhaustible varieties, is not continually exhibiting a new appearance: For it is known to all that diseases of the same name or of the same species, never occur clearly alike in practice, both on account of numberless circumstances derived from temperament, age, sex, season, state of the atmosphere &c. and by reason of different modes of living, and of treating diseases. They miss the mark and labour in vain, who delight to follow this trifling exactness in describing this or that disease.

The more experienced practitioners have for a long time complained, that the science of Medicine has been corrupted by the luxuriant wit of Physicians, and that nothing scarcely comes to

light, except *Hypotheses*, celebrated by the most empty Babble of the Schools, which, when brought to the Touchstone of Truth, are found to be mere notions. Shamefully indeed do they blunder who think to derive a Medical Theory from such trifles, since it rather consists in *Knowledge previously obtained*, from mathematical science, experimental natural philosophy, anatomical demonstration, chemistry, natural history, &c. and in accurately observing the Phœnomena of Nature, and the powers of the animal Economy, as well in the sound as in the morbid state: from all which, selected and arranged by assiduous care, a genuine Theory of Medicine is deduced, such as was sketched out, by the ancients, and improved by some great men of the Profession, which a series of years has spared, whilst other Theories changeable at the nod of the learned, have year after year put on new faces. Therefore utterly rejecting all Hypothesis, I have not said a word on the *proximate cause* of disease, which is involved in obscurity, and I doubt not that whatsoever those have written on that subject, who have not blushed to deal in such trifles, will be rejected by the scrutiny of the more judicious. But the *remote* and *manifest* causes are carefully noted, from which when rightly examined, the genuine lineage of a Disease is mostly traced.

It must be obvious to all, of what use toward the developement of the most intricate diseases, and for the advancement of Medicine, observations taken from *dissections of dead bodies are*, wherefore there is cause to admire that medical writers, so little studious of a matter of such importance, should have written scarcely a word on the subject, or have treated it superficially. On which account I have exhibited histories almost numberless, from the heaps of subjects which I have dissected for 20 years and upwards, extracted and abridged to suit this work. To these I have thought fit to subjoin whatsoever *Bonetus*, *Mangetus*, and other moderns have recorded from the writings of *Soothsayers*. Nevertheless there was necessity to make a choice, since many authors, consulting only their own reputation, or ignorant of Anatomy, have gained no credit on the subject. Therefore whatsoever scattered observations I have drawn from this abundant source, I have collected and related in an abridged stile, which I thought could not be unacceptable to Physicians. Yet it must not be passed over in silence, that all diseases, even the more violent, do not always occasion any evident injury to the viscera, as very frequently when examined after death, they plainly appear unhurt, which ought to be well noticed, lest articles omitted in the history of these should rashly be considered as defects.

The *Prognosis* of Diseases I have touched upon in a few words, because I judged it vain and needless to repeat in each article, that delirium, convulsions, comatose affections, difficulty of breathing, stertor, faintings, cold sweats, and other oppressive symptoms usually attending fatal diseases, portend an unhappy issue, which certainly can be unknown to none, however rude and inexperienced. But some symptoms occur, which by reason of various circumstances, ought sometimes to be considered favourable, sometimes disastrous; such as fevers, eruptions, hæmorrhages, vomiting, diarrhœa, &c. which I have thought it worth the while carefully to note down. Nevertheless learned and experienced Physicians know that the science of future events is obscure, and the judgment concerning life and death uncertain. On this account *Hippocrates* rightly advises to predict with caution, affirming that nothing certain as to the event can be concluded in acute diseases. And perhaps this most ancient Founder of Medicine, has given us more instruction by this Saying, than by his diffuse works on Prognosis, out of which notwithstanding among many things doubtful and very intricate, some excellent observations, to be mentioned in their place, may be gathered.

I have dwelt very little, or only incidentally, on the Rules of Diet, although on the observance of these the cure principally depends: But advice on this subject appears superfluous, as I think no practitioner will be unmindful of them. As to Remedies, I have selected from the senseless hotch-potch of them, such only as were often tested among the sick, as each practitioner is able to discover those most suitable for the cure of each disease. The more experienced confess with one accord, that few remedies are required in *acute* diseases, in which it is customary, after premising the obvious medicines, to delay or forbear, until the nature of the disease become manifest. It is otherwise in *chronic* complaints, for the cure of which it is mostly expedient to prepare the way by repeated trials, from which we learn of what moment it is, in this state of things, that many remedies should be known, by the careful examination of which the desired end is frequently attained, but every one may see the necessity of a cautious choice, as medicines rarely do good, unless they be given with judgment, especially as it is confessed by all, that a Physician should be the Contemplator and Servant of Nature, and his duty, to direct her spontaneous movements with caution, or to complete and perfect her deficient and weak endeavours with timely assistance, otherwise he is wanting in the duty entrusted to him, if either in preserving health or removing

diseases, he attempt any thing against the laws of nature, or fall upon distempers with hostile force, against her will.

Nothing forbids the conjecture that no morbid affection is insuperable, if attacked in proper time and with suitable weapons. But "*hoc opus, hic labor est.*" It is expedient to deal cautiously with remedies, though they may appear innocent, since it remains a fixed maxim that many maladies may safely be left to the mere powers of nature, which through untimely or preposterous applications, may be rendered more violent or even fatal. The vulgar part of Physicians are with truth accused of rashness, who, without investigating the nature of a disorder, or but slightly attending to the pulse, hasten to apply their remedies: while the learned and experienced, being more slow of judgment, think that nothing ought to be done without properly considering all circumstances, and candidly own that the effects of medicines are doubtful and deceptive, whatever those may babble to the contrary who arrogate to themselves the name of Physician. For it is established among practitioners of the first rank, that nature is the best healer of diseases, and that the most common affections if left to her, are spontaneously removed; but that in others there is no small advantage in calling in the aid of Art, provided our remedies be given in proper time and in suitable doses, nevertheless even such as are adapted to the relief of mankind, do sometimes become hurtful through bad and presumptuous administration.

From this it is evident how far they err from the mark, who, despising simples, and adhering to the disgusting notions of the Arabians, overturn the healthful endeavours of nature, by their ill-timed apparatus of remedies; and reduce their borrowed prescriptions to the rule of their boastful craft. Alas! wretched patients, unless nature vanquish the disorder and overcome their preposterous helps.

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